

# Musgrave Battles Young Over Highway Funding Bill

by John Stanton

Rep. Marilyn Musgrave, R-Colo., renewed her battle Wednesday with Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Young over his efforts to increase the federal gasoline tax to pay for his \$375 billion highway and transit bill, calling the proposal inappropriate and counter to Republican efforts to raise taxes.

The attack on Young came as he was formally unveiling the bill, which would include \$298 billion in highway spending over its six-year life.

"In a year when Congress has worked hard to reduce the tax burden of hard-working individuals," Musgrave said in a statement, "it is preposterous to saddle taxpayers with this proposed increase...before asking

people to pay more. Mr. Young needs to look at viable options to fund this transportation bill. The federal government already pilfers too much at the pump."

Earlier this year, Young and Musgrave sparred over the issue, and Musgrave, a freshman lawmaker, quickly became the leader of conservative efforts to block Young's gas tax plan. Musgrave's efforts to battle Young also reportedly have won her favor with House leadership and the White House, which also oppose a gas tax increase.

Young's bill is a reauthorization of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, which he has renamed "TEA-Lu," after his wife, Lu. The bill would increase highway spending by

more than \$100 billion over TEA-21's \$195 billion in funding.

Transit programs would also increase from \$45 billion to \$69 billion, and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administrations would see increases in combined funding from \$6 billion to \$7.5 billion.

Additionally, under the bill, so-called donor states, which put more money into Highway Trust Fund through the gas tax than they receive, would see the guaranteed level of funds they receive rise from 90 percent to 95 percent, and all states would see a significant boost in funding over the bill's life.

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